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AUTHOR DeYoung, Alan J.; Nadirbekyzy, Bakhytkul
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ABSTRACT

Since the Soviet Union disbanded in 1991, the schools of the new Republic of Kazakstan have focused on rediscovering national history and culture, while the form and structure of schooling have also undergone major changes. This paper describes the current situation at a rural school--Tokash Bokin--in the context of the history of Russian and Soviet control of education and recent political and economic changes. In the late 19th century, Kazakstan was conquered by Czarist Russia, which viewed the nomadic Kazaks as uncivilized. The region's few Islamic schools were replaced by Russian schools teaching Russian language and culture, but formal schooling was provided to few Kazaks. Following the revolution, Soviet education became universal, but its goals of furthering industrialization and collectivization were anathema to nomadic Steppe cultures, and its policies undermined instruction in all native central Asian languages. As the Soviet Union crumbled, various instructional and administrative changes were implemented. Unfortunately, the costs of implementing reforms during the transition to a market economy have been particularly disastrous for education. Although Kazakstan is comparatively advantaged in terms of human capital, educators face great challenges: to rediscover and teach the nation's history in a language that most Kazaks do not speak fluently, and to do so in the face of declining fiscal resources and a shortage of qualified teachers. Parents now have various choices of schools and curricula, but those who can afford it opt for private schools. Financial problems are exacerbated for rural schools such as Tokash Bokin, which can not pay its teachers on time nor provide heat, electricity, or school supplies. However, the most serious problem may be the sacrifice of educational equity in the rush to a market economy. (Contains 11 references.) (SV)

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ED 403 105

REDEFINING SCHOOLING AND COMMUNITY IN POST-SOVIET KAZAKSTAN: TOKASH BOKIN AND THE SCHOOL AT AIKKANAR

Alan J. DeYoung
University of Kentucky
and
Bakhytkul Nadirbekyzy
Kazakh State Academy of Management

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Tokash Bokin was a Kazak military leader of the Bolshevik forces during Russia's Civil War. Afterwards, many civic places - including schools - were named for him in his native Kazakstan. But that was when heroes and place names were chosen by government officials in the USSR. In 1991, the USSR disbanded; thus allowing the rediscovery and rewriting of history to be done by formerly suppressed peoples and nations. In the new Republic of Kazakstan, contributions of pre-Soviet Kazaks to their society is of primary undertaking in the nation's schools. As well, the form and structure of schools themselves is currently under reform, since Kazakstan no longer has to follow administrative mandates issued in Moscow.

One place named for Tokash Bokin is a rural school in the Zhambul district of Almaty, about sixty miles from the nation's capital. The former village school, dating from the mid 1950s,

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was named "New Life" school. Like most villages in Soviet Central Asia, the village was literally created overnight by Russian, German, Caucasian and Kazak farming families assigned here to work on the town's major employer, a collective farm. At that time, this was "Prudky," or "ponds" in Russian; a village named by district administrators. By 1994, most of the Russian and German families have left the region for homes either in the city or in the distant lands of their ancestors - leaving primarily rural Kazaks to reclaim the village.

In order to fashion their own national identity for the first time, Kazaks have begun to change many regional names and to rediscover important Kazak figures of the past since 1991. "Prudky," for instance, has been changed into "Aikkanar," Kazak for "source of white water." This year also marks the 150th birthday of Zhambul Dzhabaev, namesake of Akkanar's Raion (or district), and a national poet and hero less well remembered or honored when the district was under Soviet control. School children throughout the Zhambul district are already rehearsing for the celebration of his birth to take place in August, 1996. Other Kazak heroes from the nineteenth century have likewise been officially resurrected, including poet Abai Kunabaev for whom the former national pedagogical university was renamed in 1995.

In any event, Tokash Bokin remains the name of the school in Akkanar today because even though he was a Red Army hero, and thus a Soviet figure, he was an ethnic Kazak who gave his life to the Bolshevik cause during the country's civil war (1918-1921).

And during that era, many Kazaks believed that a Bolshevik government - publicly dedicated to democracy and the rights of workers - had to be an improvement over those of the colonialist Russian Czar. Stalin, of course, proved them wrong.

THE SOVIET SCHOOL MODEL, 1920s TO 1980s

The great rush to rediscover and redefine national (mostly secular) heroes is one part of the story of school reform in Kazakstan today. A new expertise is unfolding in this country as educators are freed from constraints of the old Soviet system; and parents have a new opportunity to make national educational policy more responsive to their needs. Unfortunately, the economic, political and social conditions surrounding Kazakstan's schools are having a devastating effect on both of these potentialities.

In order to understand the educational situation of Kazakstan today, as well as to investigate the magnitude of schooling issues there today, consideration of previous colonialist and Soviet goals of education before 1991 is a prerequisite. Formerly, all Russian and then Soviet schools were run directly from Moscow. The early aims and procedures announced by Lenin and his followers for Soviet schools were comparatively progressive. Among European nations, it was only the fledgling Soviet Union which proposed universal schooling for children, under the guise that all citizens deserved such public investments, and that public education was necessary for full and equal civic participation. Lenin made such pronouncements in

1918, and notable Western educationists (e.g.,John Dewey), as well as Russian thinkers, contributed to an initial burst of educational thinking and innovation in the new Soviet state (Holmes et.al., 1995; Jones, 1995; Eklof, 1993).

Unfortunately, announced democratic and progressive aims under Lenin soon became victim of Stalinist party reforms. By the 1930s, educational policy, like economic and military policy, became highly bureaucratic and dominated by national and economic planning interests, rather than by interests of either local communities, teachers or educational theorists:

> The Soviet system of education which developed under Stalin and was elaborated, rather than dismantled, under his successors, uprooted the progressive, inquiries-oriented and democratic tradition of NEP (New Economic Policy). As it emerged, the Stalinist school was an integral part of what the ideology of perestroika labelled the "administrative-command" system. Like the system as a whole, education was characterized by a "top-down" approach: vertical lines of authority extended downward from the ministries through the regional and district authorities (ronos, goronos) to the directors of schools, teachers, and ultimately pupils (Eklof, 1993:p. 3).

The collectivist nature of emergent Soviet-style education throughout all of its republics soon came to emphasize central control over curriculum, administration, and preparation for work and careers. The ministry system found in the Soviet economic, agricultural and industrial sectors also dominated public and higher education. Central planning formulated and administered education policy from the many "children's gardens" or day care centers through doctoral level training in all fields.

Consequently, Soviet students typically excelled in

mathematics and the hard sciences as a result of technological aims throughout their curriculum (Jones, 1995). Yet, Soviet educators were forced to ignore theory and practice pursued in other nations which underscored the importance of individual differences in student abilities, and stages of child development and learning histories which we in the West believe are important components of school achievement (Holmes et. al., 1993). Official policy uniformly stressed equal rather than different curricular efforts on behalf of childrens' learning, and during the Stalin years those educators who disagreed were not infrequently labeled as counter revolutionary and jailed.

Because "scientific socialism" was considered unavoidable as a final stage of all human social organization, much Western philosophy and literature was also eschewed as elitist individualism, and Western notions about the superiority of philosophical and conceptual knowledge was rigorously (officially) rejected in the USSR in favor of the "dignity of productive labor." In Soviet thought, Marx, Engels and Lenin had discovered the "truth" of collective life and the organizing role of the Communist Party. The job of educators was to support policies and institutions which would advance scientific socialism and help create the new Soviet citizen, and not to question or challenge the emerging orthodoxy of the USSR via incorporating alternative teachings into their curricula. Official pronouncements about the dignity and equality of technical and applied labor, though, concealed the fact that by

the 1980s most parents with any influence were helping their children avoid vocational schools and to use the University as an avenue to upward social mobility (Jones, 1995).

Educators eager to get help from the educational research community about alternative teaching strategies or curricula were also disadvantaged under the former Soviet education system:

> The structure for educational research and development was similarly centralized. In the United States, such work is partly directed by federal and state agencies, and there are a few federally funded centers for research and dissemination, but there are also a myriad of private foundations, university-funded centers, private think-tanks, and groups affiliated with private corporations and individual school districts, to say nothing of the agendas of thousands of individual researchers and designers of curricular materials. In the USSR, virtually all these activities (were) planned and conducted by a single Academy of Pedagogical Sciences (APS) through a group of fifteen research institutes. Decisions about what directions to pursue, and perhaps more importantly, what directions should not be pursued, were made centrally. (Kerr, 1992; 477).

THE SOVIET MODEL OF SCHOOLING APPLIED IN CENTRAL ASIA

Kazakstan's educational problems, however, even preceed those forced by the top-down curricular and administrative approaches of the USSR. Kazakstan is not European, nor Slavic, nor Western, nor Christian. Its history of nineteenth century Russian colonization and later Soviet incorporation involves cultural and imperialist themes which need to be considered in order to understand the educational situation there today.

Central Asia was in the nineteenth century to Russia as India was to England and Africa was to France: a target of colonialism. The territory of the Kazaks was viewed as occupied

by uncivilized nomads poorly utilizing vast agricultural areas and in need of "civilizing." In the south and west, there were "civilizing" influences, but of the wrong type in the eyes of Moscow: Islamic Sultanates of Bukhara, Kokand and Khiva (Rywkin, 1990). The few formal schools that existed in this part of the world before the Russians came were Islamic training centers taught in Arabic.

By the end of the nineteenth century, all of Central Asia had fallen to advances of the Czarist armies, and reorganizing these territories into political entities suitable for control by Russia was in order. The territory which would become Kazakstan was initially "civilized" by establishing land reforms which made it impossible for nomadic clans to continue their former way of life; by forcing tribal groups to accept the authority of Russian governors; by encouraging in-migration of various non-Asian ethnic groups into the Asian Steppe; and by replacing the few Islamic schools of the region with Russian schools where Russian civilization and Russian language were the focus. Even so, formal schooling was provided to only a fraction of the population until the 1930s.

Many educators were nationalists and opposed to emerging Soviet education policy. Their educational pursuits focused upon universal literacy, equal rights for women, and creating an autonomous Central Asian state (Olcott, 1987). But by the time schooling was universal in the territory of the Kazaks, it was not Kazak but Soviet; and by the 1930s it was clear that Soviet

schools (like those under the former Czar), had no interest in ceding local control to educators or to the people. Even worse, Soviet economic policy under Stalin and his successors came quickly to favor industrialization and collectivization, both of which were anathema to nomadic Steppe cultures. Soviet education policy also effectively undermined instruction in all native Central Asian languages (like Kazakh), and imposed Russian as the official language in all republics:

> Moscow made abundantly clear that its centrally controlled development strategy would favor the needs of the center above those of the periphery, the requirements of industrialization over those of agriculture, and, of course, the interests of Russians over those of Kazakhs. The development strategy chosen - that is, collectivization and nationalization of almost all property in the rural sector - was especially devastating to the Kazakhs; traditional Kazakh culture defined a man (sic) through the animals he owned, making private ownership of livestock almost the definition of what it was to be a Kazakh. As might be expected, then, the Kazakhs strongly resisted nationalization and when necessary sacrificed their lives and the lives of their animals to try to prevent its introduction. The Kazakh community that survived confiscation was a broken one, its traditional leadership weakened and stripped of many age-old functions; the survivors were malleable and hence of greater value as Soviet citizens (Olcott, 1987: 248).

As was the case throughout the Union, ideological and scientific training serving industrial development and scientific agriculture came to dominate educational aims in the Kazakh SSR throughout the twentieth century. Social progress was envisioned to come about only with commitment to soviet socialism, and offered upward social mobility via the school system primarily through membership in the Communist Party. Rising through the

ranks of youth groups in the schools (Octoberists, Young Pioneers and Komsomol), and obtaining required technical skills, were prerequisites of all those who desired occupational success:

> Party membership virtually assured a young Kazakh a sinecure for life, and the more aggressive and hard-working individuals could rise as high as their ambitions demanded. The children of shepards no longer had to share their fathers' fates if they were willing to pay the cost of participation, which was formal subscription to an official ideology that asserted the primacy of Moscow over all the republics and the superiority of the Russian culture over all national ones. ... The Kazakh aspirant who want(ed) to rise in oblast, republic, or all-union politics (had to) be Russian-speaking and (had to) look and behave as a Russian (did). He need not be assimilated but he (had to) appear assimilated, so as not to "stick out" in Russian dominated settings any more than his unusual facial characteristics (made) necessary. The Kazakh candidate (had to) also work harder than his Russian competitor and prove himself more loyal (Olcott, 1987; 248-249).

PERESTROIKA and GLASNOST

The unravelling of both the larger system of Soviet education and of the ethnic dominance it represented began in the USSR in the mid 1980s with Perestroika and Glasnost. "Uskorenia" (or acceleration) was the initial phase of Perestroika (restructuring); a general movement begun as an effort to reform the economic system by improving manufacturing efficiency. Another part of this movement was "Demokrataztiontzia," a process which would theoretically empower factory work brigades to become involved with setting product standards and timetables for more efficient production. Yet, the structural problems of the Soviet Economy proved to deep to be solved by top-down administrative mandates and the limited abilities workers had to control

economic imperatives which surrounded their industries. This led to the period of "Glasnost" or openness from 1988: a period of wider social and economic criticism which preceeded to the eventual dismemberment of the Soviet Union and to the creation of many new independent republics, like Kazakstan.

PERISTROIKA, GLASNOST, AND THE HOPES OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS

Reformist educators throughout the former Soviet Union began to seize opportunities and become vocal supporters of a variety of school improvement notions counter to official pedagogy during the late 1980s. Significant educational changes throughout the system followed upon the larger political and economic reforms already underway, and educational reformers during the period championed the rights of children, reducing bureaucracy; and involving parents and local communities in the educational process:

> In one sense, the reform movement was a local embodiment of high politics, taking its cue from the general directions of reform under Gorbachev, and especially glasnost and democratization. But it also represented the renewal or legitimation of long marginalized or even repressed perspectives in education, the triumph of the progressive (used as a descriptive rather than a normative term) tradition against the educational establishment -the ministries, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences and the official Teachers' Union. And the increasing official emphasis upon "the human factor" privledged education in the rhetoric of perestroika, for if the success of reform depended, in the long term, upon fostering qualities of initiative, independence and responsibility, what could be more logical than to begin with the schools? Thus, the period 1985-1987 witnessed the emergence of a campaign for greater teacher autonomy in the classroom and for new approaches to the child (Eklof, 1993:9).

With the waning of Communist Party and its absolute control

of state and national education ministries, great debate set in all post-Soviet republics about the direction and organization of public schooling, and various factions arose representing both interests of former leaders as well as those of various reformist elements. The reformist Russian Eduction Minister Dneprov championed ten primary restructuring objectives in the early 1990s. And most other new republics had similar philosophical aims (Dneprov, 1993).

Five Russian Federation goals targeted school control or organization: democratization; administrative decentralization; multiplicity; variability; and "alternativnost," (alternative schooling models). The others focused upon curriculum and instruction: making schools more child centered; differentiation of learning based on student interests and abilities; lifelong education; and developmentalism (emphasizing active inquiry). All of these aims were to be undertaken upon the assumption that the school ought to be "in advance" of society (Eklof 1993). Furthermore, the needs of disenfranchised minority groups throughout the republics was recognized as a major problem:

> the philosophy of standardized, socialized schooling for all Russian youth, with its common curriculum and uniform teaching methods, no longer could meet the needs of an increasingly privatized and decentralized society. New concepts, such as freedom of choice in educational services, differentiation of school types and curricula, diversity, privatization, democratization, and humanization were introduced. Innovative educators identified with individual needs and specific cultural-ethnic group demands of different republics (Holmes, et. al., 1995; 276).

COMPLICATING THE PICTURE: THE EXPERIENCE OF KAZAKSTAN

Unfortunately, the costs of implementing institutional reforms during the transition to market economies throughout the former USSR has been particularly disastrous for education. Without a command structure to pay for education as well as to control it, sources of revenue to pay teachers, heat buildings and buy equipment no longer existed. And the transition to a market economy led in some republics to primary concerns for private sector investments rather than social investments, like schools and hospitals. The economic chaos of the early years after the Soviet collapse saw many dedicated teachers leaving their professions for lack of any salaries. So too, younger and potentially more innovative teachers were the first to leave, leaving behind those more comfortable with the old curricula and teaching methods (Dneprov, et.al., 1993; Holmes, et.al., 1995).

In addition, however, to general curricular and administrative issues raised by the end of official Soviet ideology and the end of ministry funding for schooling, former central asian republics like Kazakstan faced the further difficulty of having to recreate (or create) its ethnic and national heritage, both of which had been robbed by Russia and the Soviet Union. The Kazaks were physically and culturally decimated by Russia and the USSR. Millions of Kazaks either were killed, starved to death or fled the country this century (Olcott, 1987). Thus, efforts to repatriate self-exiled Kazaks from China and Mongolia were undertaken, for example, in hopes of increasing the percentage of Kazaks living in the territory of

Kazakstan. But to educators of all types and levels has fallen the greatest nation-building challenge: rediscovering and teaching the history of the nation and its people; and transmitting most of this knowledge in a native language which is not even a useable second language for most urban (and professional) Kazaks; and completing both of these huge curricular and instructional tasks with few and declining fiscal resources.

In their favor is the fact that on the eve of independence Kazakstan was comparatively advantaged in terms of human Capital resources. Most of the population was literate, and mathematical and technical skills were well dispersed throughout the population. The national literacy rate was over 90%, and almost 3.8 million school-aged children were officially enrolled during the 1993/94 academic year. So too, the status of women in Kazakhstan is arguably better in terms of education, occupational participation and civil rights than many other Muslim countries to the south. As in most developed nations, many highly educated women were among the ranks of teachers - once a highly valued status in Kazakstan and throughout the former USSR.

Kazakstan today, however, faces a huge number of curricular and instructional problems related to expertise and responsiveness. The government of Kazakstan, for example, has decreed that Kazak (a Turkic language) is the national language, and that all citizens must be able to speak it for full participation in civic and economic affairs of the country. Yet,

fewer than 1% of Kazakstan's ethnic Russians (who comprise approximately 40% of the nation's population) speak Kazak. They have appealed this move both internally and complained to the Russian Federation in an effort to restore Russian as at least an equal language under the new national constitution. Nevertheless, the teaching of Kazak to all students in the nation's schools has become a primary undertaking, complicated by the facts that many Kazaks are not fluent in the language; that textbooks for such teachings are in short supply; and that obtaining trained teachers in many places is difficult due to the very low salaries earlier mentioned.

The teaching of Kazak history and culture also represents an area of very intense curricular reform, as do new courses in western-style econonomics and government organization at upper grade levels. Unfortunately, recruiting teachers and developing texts in each of these fields are viewd by the Ministry of Education among ther most serious contemporary problems (Ministry of Education, 1995). Descriptions of the deeds of great batyrs - ethnic heroes of previous centuries - is found throughout the schools today (where there are teachers to teach such things), as are more recent contributions of pre-Soviet Statesmen and nationalist parties of the early twentieth century. Pictures of Kazak intellectuals purged and killed by Stalin in the 1930s also dot the walls of many schools throughout the land.

But of course, there is great danger in dedicating too many resources and too much energy in the reconstructing of a useable

past for ethnic Kazaks throughout the curriculum. For example, there are over 100 different ethnic groups in Kazakstan today who are all wondering and worrying about their status in the new republic, now clearly dominated by ethnic Kazaks. Some of the larger minority ethnic groups do have instruction in their native languages (e.g., Uzbek; Uigher); but the larger question remains: will minority ethnic interests be any better represented in Kazak schools in the future than they were in former Soviet schools?

Perhaps more importantly from the Kazak perspective are cultural issues going beyond those raised by the teaching of Kazak language; specifically, how much evil can be attributed to the Russian and Soviet colonizers of the past hundred years when their vestiges are still powerfully present internally and externally? Many Russian ethnics have only known Kazakstan as home for three or four generations, and truly believe that Kazakstan is really still part of Russia. Meanwhile, Russia remains the largest trading partner of Kazakstan. And Kazakstan today places its greatest immediate economic hopes on its huge oil reserves; but any oil or gas transported out of the country has to go through Caspian Sea ports controlled by Moscow. Finally, with a strong nationalist movement in Russia in the late 1990s and with many northern Oblasts of Kazakstan primarily populated by Russian ethnics, there is good reason to suspect that Russia may decide to invite or compel as much as half of Kazakstan to rejoin it in a new reunification, specifically if Russians living there invite this reintegration. So, in

important ways, Kazakstan is still dominated either by Russia or by legitimate fears about its northern neighbor.

ON RESPONSIVENESS AND EXPERTISE

Renent economic circumstances and political decisions in Kazakstan are having a mixed effect on the nation's education system. Since independence, government revenues have been in decline and corruption in both public and private undertakings has been widespread:

> Although the government's intentions may have been good, and although a number of people have made money since independence, including some who have acquired large private fortunes, in general Kazakstan's economy has traced a vertiginous decline since independence. ... The impact of this decline on the population has been pronounced. In 1993, inflation was approximately 2,500 percent. ... Wage increases have not kept pace with inflation: real wages declined by 33 percent across the republic during the first half of 1994, with greater losses in northern Kazakstan, where workers on average lost more than half their spending power. Inflation compounds the impact of industrial unemployment, which has begun to spread through the economy in both open forms and more-disguised ones, such as reduced workweeks, forced vacations, and long periods in which workers are not paid (Olcott, 1995: 282-283).

Kazakstan's freedom from Moscow's control has led to new models of schooling, and to giving parents various choices of schools and curricula (all of which are still controlled by the Kazak Miistry of Education). In Kazakstan today there are over two dozen officially sanctioned curricular types, mostly diverging at the secondary school level. Some schools emphasize humanities instruction (the Gymnasium); some retain heavy emphasis on Mathematics and Sciences (the Lycea). Some curricula are taught primarily in Kazak, others primarily in Russian. Some

schools are "magnet" secondary schools which specialize in foreign language instruction (English, for instance, is quite popular) or business and economics courses preparatory to higher education institutes specializing in similar undertakings. Often this link between a higher education institution and a secondary school is a formal one. In any event, contemporary education in Kazakstan now accepts that schools need to respond either to differences in children's interests (at lower levels), and certainly to interests of parents at the secondary levels.

On the other hand, approximately 30% of the nation's teachers left their jobs in 1993 to attempt to find work in the private sector as government support for public schools fell from over 8% of the nations budget to about 3.6% in 1995 (Jurinov, 1996). In 1995, the MoE projected 22,323 teacher vacancies in the country. The monthly salary of a teacher with a normal teaching load in 1995 was 2700 Tenge, or about forty one dollars. Yet, we know of no teachers here who have ever been paid on time; we know of very few teachers who even try to live on one teacher salary; and often salaries are delivered two and three months late. And the government also reported that 2700 Tenge was the average monthly food cost in the nation. In 1996, the MoE also projected that only 57% of the costs of schooling in the country are paid for by government sources; and that only about 20% of students in the country could afford to buy textbooks, which the government would no longer supply for free.

The fiscal crisis in schooling in Kazakstan suggests that

although post-Soviet educators there today enjoy much greater freedom in developing innovative programs, this "expertise" is not guaranteed in the system at public school level if we use American criteria to define a public school. Instead, there is a major move to "respond" to more affluent parents who can afford to partly or primarily subsidize what were once public schools. Better teachers and better facilities are to be found today at the secondary level primarily in those schools where parents can afford to pay the equivalent of twenty or thirty dollars extra per month for their children's education. These are the schools that can afford to hire the best teachers remaining in education; can afford to heat their buildings; and can purchase computers and software to use on them for the benefit of their students. Unfortunately, most parents in this country do not have this sort of extra money to spend on education, even though formal education remains highly valued. Furthermore, it is the announced intention of the government to divest itself of most public pre-school programs and vocational programs, and that they "should be transferred to a pay-for-services" basis."

The President and Education Minister of the Republic have both publicly proclaimed in 1996 that private schools are desirable to increase the quality of education in the nation and expand the choices parents have for their children's future. Unfortunately, the implications for unequal social and occupational futures for poorer children and for children of different ethnic groups are clear in such developments. Higher

education, too, is the target of reform in the country, and the Ministry of Education seeks to decrease by 25-30% the number of government supported students, seeking to replace them with fee-paying students.

RETURN TO TOKASH BOKIN

At Tokash Bokin, the issues of expertise and responsiveness within a declining economic base are both visible, although not both positive. Enrollments here are at fewer than half of school capacity at 458 students. When the school were first freed of Soviet Control, a new computer lab was installed and a hands-on Western style economics training curriculum was constructed. Today, however, there is no computer teacher and no money for the economics program to be run after school. Furthermore, several classes (in Mathematics and Kazak languages) are today being taught by teachers from the village who formally retired several years earlier. No other teachers are available.

The rural school in Kazakstan faces a similar sort of teacher shortage problem (compared to the city) as does the United States. But since the school curriculum is arranged differently on different days, teachers in the city can hop from school to school for extra pay as their schedules permit. We doubt that teaching 50 and 60 hours a week in order to survive enables the success of the new freedoms teachers have to be innovative and expert. But of course, we could be wrong.

Being hours away from the city, Tokash Bokin cannot rely in the same fashion on moonlighting teachers as schools in Almaty

can, but over half of the schools 45 teachers do "overload," or teach more than the usual number of hours. And, Tokash Bokin teachers are paid three or four months late, thus having to depend on their extended family resources to survive. This is very likely another reason many teachers leave or change jobs if they have an option. The second author of this paper made this choice herself. The fact that teaching conditions are also very difficult compounds the problem. In the three days of our February school interviews, there was no heat or electricity in school: it was never above freezing. There were few supplies paid for by the Ministry; most came from teacher salaries.

Parents at Tokash Bokin, however, likely are more responsive now than they were allowed to be in the past, and more so than in many city schools of Kazakstan. And their avenue into Tokash Bokin has come about partly because of the national ethnic ferment. Parents throughout the former USSR have had to pick up some of the socializing slack created by the dismemberment of the Octoberists, Pioneers, and Komsomol. There is an active Parent Committee at Tokash Bokin which works with teachers on citizenship and grade problems of students in the school. As well, this group has had to learn about fund raising for school repair projects; a not uncommon undertaking throughout the U.S.

Parents have also helped Tokash Bokin respond to new schooling opportunities in the new nation via another avenue. Concerned over the absence of Kazak culture or Kazak leaders in the curriculum, the late 1980s saw the introduction of "Peoples'

Pedagogics" into the schools. Tokash Bokin is organized into a mandatory curriculum, 9 AM to 2PM; then an active after-school program. The after school program includes some subjects (like agriculture and industrial arts) which have long histories in Soviet schools. But tokash Bokin also has Peoples' Pedagogics, which focuses upon 19th century nomadic traditions of the country, its art forms, its symbols; its music; its weavings; its legends, etc. Parents run this program, often by recruiting grandparents who remember some of the old traditions for transmitting to the children. And, since Peoples' Pedagogics predates the introduction of the new ethnic national formal curriculum, parents and grandparents now aid teachers in their language and cultural classes during the morning hours.

But in the end, we conclude that public education in Kazakstan and probably in other former Soviet countries faces problems even more serious than its fiscal ones. Education, after all, is about values. Educational reformers in the USSR just before its breakup argued that the school should lead the culture: a value all educators likely concur with. In the West, we have also always argued that the value of equity is critical in the schools, since inequality is the norm in the private sector. We suspect in the rush to a market economy, that the schools of Kazakstan are being asked to follow, and that the value of educational equity - a goal many of us in American education still appreciate - is being sacrificed under the name of private sector needs. Expertise is becoming mostly available

there to children who start from an advantaged position, and schools are increasingly responding to the dollar. It is not only the name of Tokash Bokin which may not survive the school at Akkanar; the school itself is in trouble, as are all rural schools and the poorer Kazak and other ethnic children who attend them there - and in the cities.

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